

Course Outline: Rels301 L. Eslinger § Rels 301 course outline

Course Outline: Rels 301, Fall 2005

Logistics Course Religious Studies 301 - Studies in the Hebrew Bible  
/ Old Testament

Venue TR 12:30-1:45 - SS 0012

Instructor L. Eslinger (email); office hours: 12-1 M or by  
appointment

Office Dept. Religious Studies, Social Sciences 1334

Web [www.ucalgary.ca/~eslinger](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~eslinger)

Texts

- NASB translation of the Bible

#### Content

Skills Development close reading skills: Like most ancient literary products, the Bible demands careful, close reading. Weekly readings provide opportunity to develop meticulous reading skills that will serve students in many activities.

critical thinking skills: students must engage in critical reflection on the biblical beginnings of Western worldviews and thus also on modern derivatives. The books we will study provide regular opportunity for critical engagement with human value systems and worldviews, ancient and modern. Critical reflection ("Knowledge does not consist in the impressions of sense; it consists in reasoning about them" [Plato, Theatetus 186D]).

#### Learning

##### Assessment Credit Work

1. Weekly tests

ten tests, Thursdays (25 min.) 70

2. Unit tests

midterm 27 Oct (50 min.) 20

final 08 Dec (50 min.) 10

Total: (N.B. no additional credit work will be offered.) 100

Grading Scale

A 100-90 B- 74-70 D+ 54-50

A- 89-85 C+ 69-65 D 49-45

B+ 84-80 C 64-60 F 44-0

B 79-75 C- 59-55

A numerical grade is assigned for each course requirement.

Finally, a letter grade is assigned using this table of equivalencies.

#### Academic

Honesty Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity (University Calendar, see the index item, "Misconduct, academic").

#### Notices & Schedule

Notices 08 Sept pre-session study advice: read the Old Testament as many times as possible

#### Class Schedule

Week of Topics Secondary Lit.

01 06 Sept Framing Stories & The Study of the Bible primary: Gen 1

secondary:

- John Calvin, Preface to Genesis commentary [confessional frame]
  - Lang. B. "The Ancient Near East, ca. 3400-500 B.C.E.: A Brief Guide to Its Cultural Background," Lang, B., *The Hebrew God : Portrait of an Ancient Deity* (New Haven : London: Yale University Press, 2002), 209-15. [historical frame]
  - Wilson, E. O., *Consilience. the Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 223-29. [historical sciences frame]
- 02 13 Sept Mapping The Human Environment: Space, Time, Significant Others primary: Gen 1-2

secondary:

- Guthrie, S. E., *Faces in the Clouds. a New Theory of Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 186-204 [cog. sci.]
- Bruner, J., "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991), 1-21.

03 20 Sept Self-Aware Independent Behaviour: Catalyst for Mythos primary: Gen 3-11

secondary:

- Lorenz, K., *Behind the Mirror. a Search for a Natural History of Human Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 15 (two paragraphs from "Epistemological prolegomena," *Behind the Mirror* {compare L's fantasy of human awakening and that in Gen 3})
- Frankfort, H., H. A. Frankfort, "Myth and Reality," in Frankfort, H., H. A. Frankfort, J. A. Wilson, and T. Jacobsen, *Before Philosophy. the Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (New York and Baltimore: Pelican, 1946), 11-36.
- R. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," Bultmann, R., E. Lohmeyer, J. Schniewind, H. Thielicke, and A. Farrer, *Kerygma and Myth. A Theological Debate* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 1-16. [scripture & myth]

04 27 Sept Archetypes of aCovenantal Economy of Religion primary: Gen 12-50

secondary:

- Brodie, T. L., *Genesis as Dialogue. a Literary, Historical, & Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35-50 (src. Oxford Scholarship Online).

05 04 Oct Exodus: A Golden Moment [not Age]primary: Exod 1-19

secondary:

- periodized history in myth [lec.]
- Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 1-201
- Lovejoy, A. O., and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1935), pp. ??

06 11 Oct Inevitable Decline: Tragedy, The Preeminent Biblical Trope primary:

secondary:

- three elemental plot structures [lec.]
- Booker, C., *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 1-6, 699-702.

07 18 Oct Technologies of the Sacred: Shrine primary: Exod 20-40

secondary:

- Gauchet, M., *The Disenchantment of the World. a Political History of Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 107-10.

08 25 Oct Technologies of the Sacred: Sacrifice primary: Lev; Deut secondary:

- Milgrom, J., "Priestly ("P") Source," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5 (eds. D. N. Freedman, G. A. Herion, D. F. Graf, J. D. Pleins, and

A. B. Beck, New York: Doubleday, 1992), 454-61.

09 01 Nov Technology of the State: The Political Histories primary: 1 Sam 8-12; 2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 5-8

secondary:

- Gauchet, M., The Disenchantment of the World. a Political History of Religion (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4-18.

10 08 Nov Prophecy: Ethics as Cultural Escapism

- reading day; no class on 11 Nov primary: Isa 1; Jer 1-4

secondary:

- Y.-F. Tuan, Escapism (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 5-27.

11 15 Nov Prophecy: Futurism and a Transcendent Monogod primary: Isa 1; Jer 1-4

secondary:

- Assmann, J., "Monotheism and Polytheism," Religions of the Ancient World. a Guide (ed. S. I. Johnston, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17-31.

- Frankfort, H., H. A. Frankfort, "The Emancipation of Thought from Myth," in Frankfort, H., H. A. Frankfort, J. A. Wilson, and T. Jacobsen, Before Philosophy. the Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (New York and Baltimore: Pelican, 1946), 237-63.

12 22 Nov Apocalyptic: Mapping a Better Future primary: Daniel

secondary: tba

- {primacy of causality in humans' being in-formed; Popper: purpose of science / causal understanding > economic > prediction > control -- apocalyptic anticipates that, a magical version of the scientific need to know

13 29 Nov Second Temple Jewish pragmatism primary: Neh 1-3; Esther

secondary:

- James, William, "What Pragmatism Means," Pragmatism (New York: Dover Pub, 1907), 17-32.

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14 06 Dec Wisdom: Cultural Introversion (Pragmatism & Skepticism) primary: Prov | Eccl; Job

secondary: tba